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PHIL 465.01: Major Philosophers of the 19th Century - G.F.W. Hegel

David Sherman

University of Montana, Missoula, david.sherman@umontana.edu

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G. W. F. HEGEL
PHIL 465, SECTION 01 (CRN: 73163)
LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING, ROOM 243
TR 2:10-3:30
FALL SEMESTER 2005

Professor: David Sherman
Office: LA 153, ext. 2607

Office Hours: TR: 1230-130 pm and by appt
E-Mail: david.sherman@umontana.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

With his “Copernican Revolution,” which purported to overcome the skepticism of empiricism and the dogmatism of rationalism by making objective knowledge dependent on the constituting faculties of the thinking subject, Kant launched continental philosophy, in which (in some sense) the self-reflective first-person standpoint becomes an ineliminable part of every philosophical inquiry. Yet, many of Kant’s followers did not think that his revolution was radical enough. To overly simplify, from the theoretical standpoint, there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with his idea of the noumenon, and, from the practical standpoint, there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the formal, individualistic, categorical imperative. After a frantic period, in which many philosophers tried to deal with what they took to be the residual problems of a revolution that had not gone far enough, the post-Kantian era culminates in the work of Hegel, who seeks to bring Kant’s “Copernican Revolution” to fruition.

In this course we shall deal with Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1806) and his *Philosophy of Right* (1820), which deal with “truth” and “right,” respectively. In these works, he extends and transforms Kant by rejecting his dualistic metaphysics, the fixedness of the categories on which his epistemology is based, and his abstract morality in favor of a non-metaphysical framework that argues for the fluid and social nature of the categories through which we come to know the world, and the collective, concrete nature of our ethical commitments.

There are two themes that shall motivate us throughout our readings. First, we shall consider Hegel’s work in the light of the Kantian revolution, for in many respects the conflicts between Kant and Hegel delineate the framework in which much of contemporary philosophical debate has taken place. Second, we shall consider the movement of Hegel’s thought itself between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Right*. The *Phenomenology* is philosophically explosive, the harbinger of “a new dawn,” while *The Philosophy of Right* is not infrequently seen as the work of an exhausted philosopher, who not only sees philosophy as a sort “mop-up” operation (it only paints its grey in grey) but also cashes out in favor of what many take to be a contrived social reconciliation that would justify our obligations to the state in general (perhaps), and the Prussian State in particular (much less likely, although nominally so).

REQUIRED TEXTS

G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. Miller, Oxford, 1977 (“Ph”)
G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, tr. Knox, Oxford, 1952 (“PR”)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Your evaluation for the course will be based on two exams, one paper, class participation, and attendance. Each exam constitutes 30% of your final grade. (I reserve the right to change the date of the first exam, depending on the speed with which we move through the materials.) The paper is worth 40% of your final grade. For undergraduate students, the paper must be no less than 2000 words, while, for graduate students, it must be no less than 3000 words. Based on your class participation and attendance, I reserve the right to adjust your grade by one increment.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

CLASS OF:	READINGS:
August 30 September 1	Introduction Ph 1-24 (Preface)
September 6 September 8	Ph 24-45 (Preface continued) Ph 46-57 (Introduction)
September 13 September 15	Ph 58-79 (Sense-Certainty and Perception) Ph 79-111 (Force and the Understanding and Self-Certainty)
September 20 September 22	Ph 111-119 (Lordship and Bondage) Ph 119-138 (Stoicism, Skepticism, Unhappy Consciousness)
September 27	Ph 139-145, 211-235 (Intro. to Certainty and Truth of Reason, Pleasure and Necessity, Law of the Heart, Virtue and the way of the world)
September 29	Ph 236-262 (Animal kingdom, Reason as lawgiver, Reason testing laws)
October 4 October 6	Ph 263-294 (The ethical world, Ethical action, Legal status) Ph 294-355 (Culture and Enlightenment)
October 11	Ph 355-409 (Absolute freedom and Terror, The moral view of the world, Dessemblance or duplicity, Conscience)
October 13	Ph 410-416, 453-478 (Religion)
October 18 October 20	Ph 479-493 (Absolute Knowing) FIRST EXAM
October 25 October 27	EPR 1-13 (Preface) EPR 14-36 (Introduction)
November 1 November 3	EPR 37-57 (Abstract Right: The Person and Property) EPR 57-64 (Abstract Right: Contract)
November 8 November 10	EPR 64-74 (Abstract Right: Wrong) EPR 75-104 (Morality: Purpose/Resp; Intent/Welfare; Good/Conscience)
November 15 November 17	EPR 105-122 (Ethical Life: Introduction and The Family) EPR 122-145 (Ethical Life: Civil Society: Needs and Justice)
November 22 November 24	EPR 145-155 (Ethical Life: The Police and the Corporation) THANKSGIVING
November 29 December 1	EPR 155-212 (Ethical Life: The State: Constitutional Law) EPR 212-223 (Ethical Life: The State: Int. Law and World History)
December 6 December 8	Discussion and (Tentative) Conclusions SECOND EXAM
December 12	PAPERS DUE